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CENTRAL INTELLIGENCE AGENCY
OFFICE OF NATIONAL ESTIMATES

5 September 1951

Memorandum for the Director of Central Intelligence

Subject: Soviet and "International Volunteer" Forces in China,
Manchuria and Korea

Since the beginning of the Korean war, there has been an increasing number of reports of Soviet troops in Communist China, Manchuria, and Korea. The accumulated evidence available to CIA does not confirm the existence of Soviet line combat units in these areas, [REDACTED]

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[REDACTED] However, some organized Soviet anti-aircraft, artillery, signal, engineer, and coast artillery units are probably present although they may be attached to Chinese or North Korean forces in technical or training capacities. Furthermore, some units which appear to be Soviet, may be in fact be Chinese with Soviet advisors. It is known that there are many Soviet military advisors in these areas. It is estimated that there are 10,000 Soviet advisors with the Chinese Communist military forces alone.

There have been many low level reports of the formation of an International Volunteer Army, but thus far there is no evidence to confirm its existence. According to some reports, the army is to be employed in Korea (one report states the army is already committed in Korea), and according to others this force will be used in an invasion of Japan and/or Taiwan. Reports

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allege variously that this army is composed of nationals from every European Satellite, "Mongols," Japanese (as many as 200,000), Chinese, Indians, Malays, Indonesians, Burmese and Filipinos, as well as Soviets. The most conservative report indicates that the International Volunteer Force is merely another name for a Soviet-sponsored tactical advisory group whose 8,000 personnel will be distributed among the North Korean and Chinese Communist tactical units opposing the UN forces. The most extreme statement refers to 1,500,000 men. The figure most frequently mentioned is about 250,000 men.

It has also been reported that an International Volunteer Air Force has been organized with headquarters at Mukden. The commander of this force reputedly is the deputy commander of the Soviet Far Eastern Air Forces. It has been alleged that, under the agreement establishing this force, the USSR was to supply 1,400 aircraft and that most of the pilots were to be Soviet.

The principal confirmed fact that emerges from the welter of reports of an International Volunteer Force is that the Communist ground and air forces involved in the Korean conflict are already of an international character, and, insofar as the Chinese Communists are concerned, they are "volunteers." Any foreign units that may now be committed are almost certainly incorporated within the existing Sino-Soviet-North Korean command framework. Hence, since this de facto Communist International Force already exists in the Far East, the Communists can label the entire force as "International Volunteer Force" by fiat at any time.

Although all the motives for the creation of a Communist "International Volunteer Force" may not be fully apparent at


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the present time, the USSR has one great advantage in having such a force in the Far East: a Communist "International Volunteer Force" could provide the USSR with both a medium and a pretext for expanded participation in the Korean war. This participation could be gradually increased to a point where a state of war between the US and the USSR would exist in fact. Through the device of the International Volunteer Force, however, the USSR might expect to deny the US a legitimate basis for a direct attack on the USSR, thus nullifying the most potent striking force of the US.

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